

Foreword

I am proud to present this long-range plan for USSPACECOM. As our #1 priority, our brightest thinkers spent thousands of man-hours assembling the best ideas from the military, civil, and commercial space communities. The result is this document which, for the first time in our profession, captures in one place a comprehensive roadmap for achieving our vision for 2020. The construct that guided this effort is based on six bottom lines:

Enabler of Military Operations: From DESERT STORM to every exercise and use of force since, we've come to know that all military operations depend on space-based capabilities. We believe space will become even more important in the future. For the needs envisioned in the next decade, our already smaller military force will be much more effective because of the information available to it. Much of this information will come from space-based sensors and virtually all of it will flow through space at some point before reaching our forces.

Explosive Commercial Growth: We are on the verge of a commercial space explosion. Space-related industries are growing 20% annually. In a few years, we'll see 1,000+ new satellites launched and about \$500B spent worldwide on space applications. The inescapable conclusion is that space is becoming inextricably linked to life here on Earth.

Vital National Interest: The Tofflers said that the way a nation makes wealth is the way it makes war. Space is critical to both military and economic instruments of power—the main sources of national strength. We see space as an emerging area of vital national interest.

We Will Be Challenged: To utilize this source of national power, we will not only support from space as we do today, we will also operate in space tomorrow. As such, it is inevitable that those bent on doing us harm will challenge us in space. For some, our dependence on space will offer an attractive, low-cost (asymmetric) strategy for inflicting significant damage at relatively lower risk than taking on our impressive conventional forces.

Military Must Be Ready: The US military must guard against having our dependence on space turn into a vulnerability. Thus, protecting our freedom to use space and having an ability to deny an enemy's use of space will grow more important in the future. We know that when the challenge in space comes, our nation's leadership will turn to us for answers.

USSPACECOM Has The Lead: As the single focal point for military space, the responsibility falls to USSPACECOM to ensure access to and protection of US interests and investments in space. This plan is a critical step in fulfilling our obligation.

These six bottom lines are the thread binding our effort. This plan is designed to protect our space capabilities—civil, commercial, and military. It is our roadmap to prepare ourselves to not only do today's job in military space better, but to plan for 2020's challenges. Finally, this plan validates that the only way to achieve our vision is to eliminate stovepipes in our business by forging active partnerships throughout the space community. I look forward to engaging you on this plan and achieving together the fullest promise of space.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howell M. Estes III".

HOWELL M. ESTES III
General, USAF
Commander in Chief

March 1998